



**Communication/
Language**

Exploring Words

Option 1 (OO) A toddler participates in a book sharing about finding a puppy that is hiding.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler tells the story of trying to find a puppy that is hiding.



Cognitive

Solving Problems

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in guided play with fit-together toy fish, including requesting one or two more fish from a pretend fish store.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers select one farm animal toy for each dot on a set of cards that includes one or two dots each.



Self-Regulation

Focusing and Remembering

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers watch a caregiver play a memory game with a toy rabbit.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler plays a game of watching and remembering where a toy rabbit is hiding.

Option 3 (IG) Two toddlers take turns watching and remembering the location of a toy rabbit as part of a memory game, with caregiver support.



Social-Emotional

Exploring Feelings

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on ways to calm down when feeling upset.

Option 2 (IG) Toddlers practice some ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Physical/Health

Moving Our Bodies

Option 1 (IG) Toddlers engage in different physical movements, including crossing their midline, as part of a *Simon Says* game.

Option 2 (OO) A toddler crosses the midline with his/her arm while collecting small balls in a water table.

Option 3 (IG) Toddlers move their bodies, including crossing the midline, while acting out a pretend story.

(OO)=One-to-One, (IG)=Informal Gathering



24–36 Months

Option 1 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

A toddler participates in a book sharing about finding a puppy that is hiding.



Key Concepts

Spots

Flap

Hiding



Materials Needed

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill



Also Promotes

Cognitive

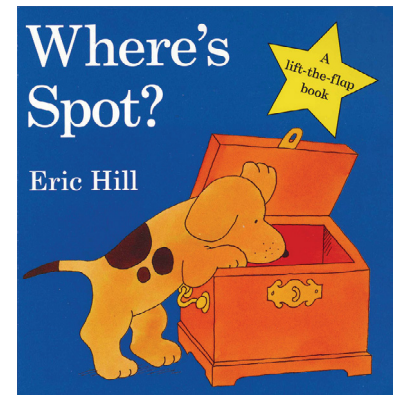
Physical/Health

BEGIN: [*Invite a toddler to join you in reading a book about a little puppy. Show the book cover.*]

Our book is about puppy that is hiding. The puppy's name is Spot. Spot's momma is trying to find him.

ASK: [*Point to the dog on the book cover and to the dog's spots when you describe them.*]

- Here is a picture of the momma dog on the cover of our book. What is the momma dog doing?
- Look at the spots on the momma dog. Here is a spot. Here is another spot. And here is another spot! Do you think the puppy has spots, too?



EXPLAIN: Maybe the puppy's name is Spot because he has spots. We'll find out whether the puppy has spots when his momma finds him in our story!

Let's read our book and find out where Spot is hiding.

ACT: [*Read the book text and add your own words to help the toddler engage the book. Use the following strategies:*

- *Encourage the toddler to lift each flap. Explain this is called a flap. The flap hides what is inside.*
- *Invite the toddler to point to and name each animal found in a possible hiding place. Expand on the toddler's response and provide accurate names.*
- *On the page with the rug, ask why momma dog thinks Spot is hiding under the rug.*
- *Briefly describe hiding places that may be unfamiliar to the toddler, such as the grand-sized piano, the clock, and the door to the space under the stairs.]*
- *After the book text asks whether Spot is in a particular location, ask the toddler whether he/she thinks that we will find Spot in the (name of location). Example: "Do you think we will see Spot when you lift the flap on this picture?"*
- *On the final picture, ask whether Spot has spots. Invite the toddler to point to the spot on the puppy.*

**Option 1 continued**

- *Also in the final picture, point to and say the words/names on each of the dog bowls. Explain that the momma dog's name is Sally.*
- *Expand on the toddler's comments and pointing.]*


RECAP: The momma dog looked in many different places to find her puppy. You lifted a lot of flaps to try to find Spot. What animals did we see in the places where the mama dog looked? Why do you think the puppy's name is Spot?

 **What to Look For—Option 1**

The activity plan covers a lot of content that can be expanded or reduced based on a toddler's response to the book and the information you share. Ways to pursue a deeper sharing of the book are suggested in the Enrichment tips. The one-to-one setting for the activity is consistent with the NAEYC accreditation standard that emphasizes one-to-one engagement of young children regarding communication and literacy skills.

In addition to the book's question of where Spot is hiding, the activity description asks the question of whether the puppy has spots (like his momma). This question, like the question of where Spot is hiding, helps build suspense and interest in the story because it cannot be answered until Spot is found.

The Spot book series is popular and the Spot character is likely to be familiar to some toddlers. In the opening segment of the activity, encourage the toddler to talk about some of the things Spot does. If the *Where's Spot?* book is familiar to the toddler, decide whether the current activity has good potential for deepening and broadening the toddler's understanding of the book's text and illustrations. You may wish to begin with Option 1 and transition into Option 2 if the toddler seems to be losing interest. Alternatively, offer Option 2 if you anticipate the current option may have insufficient appeal.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1**

Extra support ■ Talk about what it means to hide. Invite the toddler to tell about times he/she has hidden or tried to find someone who was hiding. ■ Encourage gentle action with the flaps. Emphasize the use of a finger or finger and thumb. ■ Invite the toddler to join you in saying "no" as part of the book text. Point to the small "no" text in the book when you say it.

Enrichment ■ Draw attention to details in some illustrations and the story. Examples: (1) The end of the momma dog's tail is dark just like her spots. (2) There are two "no" responses when the momma dog looks in the piano: one from the hippo, one from the bird. There are three "no" responses when the momma dog looks in the box: one from each of the three penguins. Point to each "no" word and explain this word says "no." (3) The monkey (in the closet) is swinging from a clothes bar and eating a banana. ■ In the final picture, ask the toddler why the momma dog says "Good boy, Spot."

24–36 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Receptive language

Expressive language

Awareness of print and pictures

A toddler tells the story of trying to find a puppy that is hiding.



Key Concepts

Flap

Where

What

Pictures

Remember



Materials Needed

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Self-Regulation

Physical/Health

Be Prepared: This activity is for a toddler who is familiar with *Where's Spot?* through recent participation in Option 1 or a similar book sharing.

Invite a toddler to help you remember the story of trying to find Spot. Show the book cover. Remind the toddler that the momma dog looks many different places to find Spot. Encourage the toddler to help you remember where mamma dog looked for her puppy and what she found. Explain that the pictures in the book will help us remember what happened.

Put the book in front of the toddler if you are sitting at a low table, or invite the toddler to hold the book if not at a table. The intent is to help the toddler feel ownership of the book sharing.

Invite the toddler to look at each page and tell where the mamma dog is looking for her puppy (door, clock, piano, etc.). Encourage the toddler to move the flap on each page and tell what we see. Help with words the toddler may not know or recall, such as animal names.

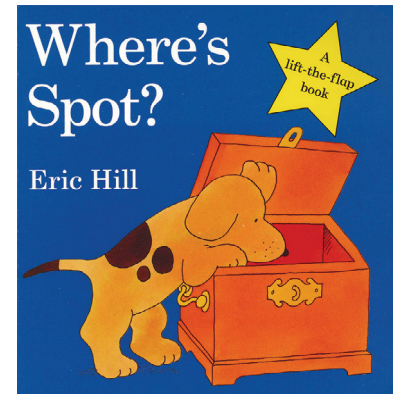
Ask questions that encourage the toddler to use the momma dog's perspective, such as "Where does the momma dog think Spot might be hiding?" and "What will the momma dog see when you move the flap?"

Conclude the session by offering enthusiastic acknowledgement of the toddler's efforts. Talk with the toddler about how the book's pictures helped him/her remember what happened.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This is a challenging but achievable activity that has strong potential to support a toddler's communication and language skills as well as story comprehension. Across toddlers, sessions will vary considerably in relation to a toddler's existing verbal skill and recall abilities. Some sessions may be quite short. A toddler may skip a page. Other sessions may involve longer discussions and attention to details of interest to the toddler.

Work to help the toddler feel comfortable in the role of storyteller. Promptly offer names and words the toddler cannot recall. The activity is not a test. It can be challenging for an adult who is accustomed to being in charge of a book sharing to accept and support the role of a toddler as storyteller. Keep a check on your contributions, which a toddler might experience as interruptions, and avoid unnecessary corrections. What's important in this



**Option 2 continued**

activity is the toddler's experience in using and putting together words to tell a story, not the accuracy of the story.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ If a toddler seems uncomfortable in a storyteller role, assume a more active role in the activity by incorporating some strategies suggested for Option 1. Example: Read the question found on most pages and ask the toddler what the momma dog will see when the flap is moved.

Enrichment ■ Ask the toddler what part of the story was easy (or hard) to remember.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: *Where's Spot?* and several other books in author Eric Hill's Spot series, such as *Good night, Spot*; *Spot Says Please*; and *Spot Goes Shopping*.

Place the books on a low table in a quiet space in the room. Encourage toddlers to look at the books and talk about what they see in the pictures. Read the books with one or several toddlers. Encourage toddlers to recall and talk about some of the things Spot does in the stories.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: see activity description

Invite a younger toddler (12–24 months) to join you for the Option 1 book sharing. A preschool-age child familiar with *Where's Spot?* will likely enjoy participating in Option 2 and the suggested Interest Area activity.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving Object inquiry skills

Toddlers participate in guided play with fit-together toy fish, including requesting one or two more fish from a pretend fish store.



Key Concepts

One
Two
More
Bigger
Taller



Materials Needed

Fit-together toy fish (see Be Prepared)
Container or tray (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Physical/Health

Be Prepared: The fit-together toy fish are also known as fish builders. Organize two fish of the same color for each toddler who participates. Do not connect the fish. Organize the remaining fish by color for a pretend fish store that you manage. Use a container or tray for keeping the remaining fish in your pretend store. The activity may be adapted for use with bunny builders as an alternative to fish builders.

Invite 3–5 toddlers to join you to play a game with toy fish that fit together. Explain that the name of our game is *More fish, please!* Give each toddler and yourself two fish of the same color. Emphasize the number of fish you are giving each toddler. Example: “Here is one fish. Here is one more fish. Each of us has two fish.”

Put the container or tray of remaining fish near you.

This is the pretend fish store. Keep the remaining fish builders in the container next to you.

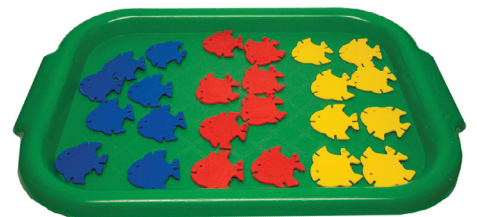
Provide sufficient time for toddlers to explore their toy fish, especially if this is a new material for most toddlers in the gathering. Then use your two toy fish to demonstrate several ways the fish can fit together. Encourage toddlers to connect their two fish. They may wish to explore several different ways.

Explain that we have a fish store. You are the person who works at the pretend fish store. Toddlers can get more fish from the fish store. Show the collection of remaining toy fish in the pretend store. Encourage toddlers to say “More fish, please” when they want more fish. Remind toddlers that *More fish, please!* is the name of our game.

When a toddler asks for more fish, respond by asking: “Would you like one fish or two fish?”

Repeat the toddler’s request. Example: “Robin wants one more fish.” Then put the requested fish in front of the toddler. Point to and say the number of fish you are giving the toddler. Emphasize the word more. Examples: “Here is one more fish.” “Here are two more fish.” Provide the same color of fish that the toddler already has unless the toddler requests a different color of fish. (see Enrichment tip.)

Describe toddlers’ actions with the fish. Draw toddlers’ attention to their peers’ work with the fish. Examples: “Sarah is making a line of fish.” “David is making



**Option 1 continued**

a fish tower." Use size words, especially bigger and taller, to describe what happens to a creation when a toddler has more fish.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

This activity continues the ELM Curriculum's use of fit-together toys to support toddlers' problem-solving skills. The most recent uses of fit-together material are in Blocks 19 and 20. Although the current activity description invites toddlers to connect the fit-together fish, some toddlers may be more interested in stacking the toys or exploring them in some other way. Connecting the toy fish is not central to the activity goal of strengthening awareness of the concepts of one and two.

Toddlers may be more interested in adding fish to their collection than in building with the fish. This is fine because the activity is intended to focus primarily on the concepts of one or two more fish. Toddlers are generally aware of numbers one and two due to their age, but may have had limited experiences in applying the concepts of one and two to objects.

Using the same color of fish helps a toddler focus on the concepts of one, two, and more without color as a potential distraction. See the Enrichment tip for adding color to the game. Attention to color of fish can be done at a general level (same color or different color) or at a specific level (example: "two more blue fish") if toddlers know the colors of the toy fish. Avoid using the activity to teach color unless toddlers have full grasp of the concepts of one, two, and more.

If you run out of a specific color of fish in the pretend store, simply explain to the toddler that the store has no more fish of the needed or requested color and offer an alternative color.

If a toddler asks for more than two fish, explain that in our game we get one or two fish at a time. But we can ask for fish as many times as we like (until the pretend store runs out of fish).

If toddlers in the gathering readily participate in the game, consider having a toddler manage the store. Sit next to the toddler storekeeper and offer verbal support as needed.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ Toddlers may have color preferences when you give each toddler two fish in the opening segment. ■ If a toddler has difficulty connecting the toy fish, hold one toy while the toddler attaches another fish. ■ If a toddler seems to be interested in more fish, but does not make a request, ask the toddler if he/she would like more fish and then remind the toddler of the "More fish, please" request. ■ If a toddler seems unclear about your question "Do you want one fish or two fish?" hold up one fish and then two fish as you repeat the question.

Enrichment ■ Add color of fish to the activity. After a toddler says whether he/she wants one or two more fish, ask "Would you like the fish to be the same color or a different color than the fish you already have?" Use color names if toddlers know colors. Example: "You have two blue fish. Would you like more blue fish or a different color of fish?" Some toddlers may include color in their request, such as "Two more blue fish, please." ■ Ask why we say "please" when we say "More fish, please."



24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Problem-solving
Object inquiry skills

Toddlers select one farm animal toy for each dot on a set of cards that includes one or two dots each.



Key Concepts

One
Two



Materials Needed

- *Cards with 1–2 large dots (see Be Prepared)
- Jumbo farm animal counters (see Be Prepared)



Also Promotes

Physical/Health
Communication/Language

*Printables provided

Be Prepared: Offer this activity to 1–4 toddlers at a time. Organize sets of two cards—a one-dot card and a two-dot card—for each toddler. Each toddler is to receive two sets of two cards (a total of four cards: two cards with one dot and two cards with two dots).

A full set (bucket) of farm animal counters includes 30 counters that represent five different animals (cow, horse, rooster, pig, sheep). Color of counter is not a factor in the current activity. Use all 30 counters for 3–4 toddlers. Use 20 counters that include 3–4 of each of the five animals for 1–2 toddlers. The jumbo farm animals used in the current activity are also used in Block 4 and again in Block 25.

Offer the activity at a low table that has adequate space for each toddler to have four dot cards in front of him/her. Set the farm animal toys in the middle of the table. Keep the assembled sets of dot cards near you.

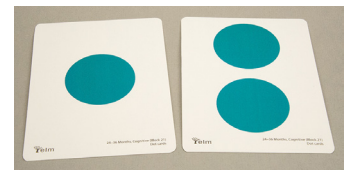
BEGIN: Look at all of the farm animal toys in the middle of our table! Each of us can pick some farm animals in our game.

EXPLAIN: *[Hold and show each animal toy as you name it or invite toddlers to say a farm animal's name.]*

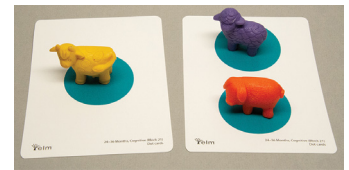
We have a cow. We have a horse. Here is a rooster. Here is a pig. And we have a sheep.

[Show a one-dot card and a two-dot card. Point to dots when you describe them.]

We will use these cards in our game. The cards have big dots. This card has one dot. This card has two dots. One, two.



We will pick a farm animal toy and then put the animal toy on one of the dots. We can pick any animal we want, and we can put the animal on any of our dots that does not have another animal on it. We put one animal on one dot.



[Put the two cards on the table so all toddlers can see them. Leave space between each card. Describe picking an animal toy—say its name—and putting it on one of the dots. Then describe picking another animal toy and putting it on another dot. Emphasize one and two when you describe how many animals can be put on each card.]

We can put one animal toy on our card that has one dot. We can put two animal toys on our other card because it has two dots.

**Option 2 continued**

ASK: *[Point to the open dot on your two-dot card.]*

Do I have a place for one more animal? (yes!)

EXPLAIN: *[Describe picking another animal toy and putting it on the open dot on the two-dot card.]*

Now each of my dots has a farm animal toy. I have one animal on one card and two animals on my other card.

Are you ready to play our game?

ACT: *[Distribute a preassembled set of two cards to each toddler: a one-dot card and a two-dot card. Invite toddlers to put the cards on the table in front of them, with dots facing up.]*

Let's touch each of the dots on our cards. We can begin with the card that has one dot.

[Lead toddlers in touching the dot on their one-dot card. Say "one dot" when you touch the dot on your card.]

Now let's touch the dots on the card that has two dots.

[Lead toddlers in touching each dot on their two-dot card. Example: "Here's one dot. Here's another dot. Two dots."]

Now each of us can pick one farm animal to put on one of our dots.

[Encourage toddlers to pick an animal and put it on any dot on their cards. Continue the process with two more farm animal toys, one at a time.]

We put one animal toy on each of our dots. We put one animal on one card. We put two animals on our other card.

ASK: Would you like to pick some more farm animal toys?

EXPLAIN: You may choose an animal for each dot.

ACT: *[Distribute the second set of two cards (a one-dot card and a two-dot card) to each toddler who wishes to pick more farm animals. Show cards and point to the dots when you describe each.]*

These cards are just like our other cards. One card has one dot. The other card has two dots.

[Invite toddlers to place their two additional cards in front of them, next to their two cards with farm animal toys. Repeat the process used previously for supporting toddlers in picking one farm animal toy for each dot. Provide verbal support as appropriate.]

After each toddler has put an animal toy on each dot, invite toddlers to tell what farm animals they picked. You may wish to initiate this sharing by pointing to and saying the names of animals on your cards. If toddlers seem hesitant to talk about the animals they picked, say the names of 1–2 animals for each toddler. Example: "I see a cow on one of Anton's dots. I see two horses on Tenisha's cards."]

**Option 2 continued**

RECAP: We played a game of putting a farm animal on each one of the dots on our cards. Some of our cards had one dot. Some of our cards had two dots. We had fun picking farm animal toys to put on our dots.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 2

This activity is consistent with the NAEYC accreditation standard for cognitive development that calls for opportunities for very young children to explore and manipulate materials in ways that support early mathematics skills. Placing one toy on one dot can promote beginnings of one-to-one correspondence. Using cards that differ in number of dots extends the Option 1 attention to the concepts of one and two.

Toddlers will likely differ in their interest in specific farm animals. Some may want to select specific animals, whereas other toddlers may simply enjoy the process of manipulating an appealing set of materials. Some toddlers may want to collect a certain color.

Toddlers will generally use a pincer grasp to pick up an animal counter and set it on the card. If you see a toddler who does not use his/her thumb and finger to grasp the toy, ask the toddler “Would you like to try a different way to pick up an animal toy?” and offer a demonstration. Correction is not needed during this activity, but note the need for other activities to foster the toddler’s fine motor skills.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ In the opening segment, encourage toddlers to touch and manipulate the different farm animal toys if toddlers are unfamiliar with this material. ■ Provide individualized support for a toddler’s awareness of differences between cards in number of dots. Example: “Joy, this card has two dots. One, two. This card has one dot. Would you like to point to the dot?” ■ After you distribute and describe the second set of cards, provide another demonstration of selecting one farm animal toy for each dot if it appears one or more toddlers would benefit from another example.

Enrichment ■ Ask which card has more dots/animal toys. ■ Explain that dots are like spots. Remind toddlers that we talked about (and maybe made) spots when we read the *Five Green and Speckled Frogs* story. The frogs and the log had spots. (Block 20, Communication/Language)



Interest Area

Materials Needed: water table, fit-together toy fish (Option 1), clear containers, Option 2 materials

Place the toy fish in a water table and provide two small clear containers for each child. Invite toddlers to put one toy fish in one container and two toy fish in their other container. Toddlers can empty their containers into the water and start again. One way you can participate at the table is to ask a toddler to give you a specific number (one or two) of fish for your container.

Some toddlers may enjoy using the Option 2 set of cards and the jumbo counters on their own. Arrange a play space for one child on a large tray or small table. Arrange the counters by color and stack the cards face up.



Family Child Care

Materials Needed: play dough, small animal figures, beads and laces, *My First Book of Numbers* by Eric Carle

In addition to offering Options 1 and 2 for older toddlers, provide materials for toddlers and preschool-age children to manipulate that can foster understanding of one and two. Soft balls of play dough are easily divided for children to see one ball and then two balls of dough. Add small animal figures to a dough activity to increase opportunities to talk about one and two. Preschool-age and older children also may enjoy making necklaces from beads and laces. *My First Book of Numbers* by Eric Carle offers pictures of numerals and objects for numbers 1–10.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Executive function

Toddlers watch a caregiver play a memory game with a toy rabbit.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



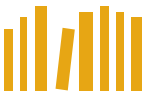
Materials Needed

3 nonbreakable flower pots
(see Be Prepared)
Small toy rabbit



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive



Optional Reading

Tale of Peter Rabbit by
Beatrix Potter

Be Prepared: The toy rabbit should be able to fit fully under each of the pots. The pots can be different sizes and colors, if you wish. Use baskets if pots are not available.

BEGIN: *[Invite 3–5 toddlers to join you for a game. Show the toy rabbit and flower pots with openings face up.]*

Our toy rabbit likes to hop around and hide. Please help me watch the rabbit hop, hop, hop and then remember where the rabbit is hiding.

We can pretend we are in a garden and these are empty pots for flowers. Rabbits like to visit gardens because there are good things to eat and fun places to hide in a garden.



There are lots of things to watch in our room. Right now we want to use our eyes to watch the rabbit hop around and hide. We want to remember where the rabbit is hiding.

ACT: *[Turn the three flower pots upside down and place them in a row so toddlers can see each pot.]*

Hop the rabbit around on the floor, always in front of the toddlers, and on top of the flower pots for a few seconds. Remind toddlers to keep watching the rabbit. While toddlers are watching, place the rabbit under the middle flower pot. Intentionally look elsewhere when you hide the rabbit.]

EXPLAIN: Oh, no! I looked at something else in our room when our rabbit went under a pot.

The rabbit hopped under a flower pot. The rabbit is hiding. But I am not sure where the rabbit is hiding!



**Option 1 continued**

[Look under the right flower pot, then the left. Have fun pretending you did not pay attention to where the rabbit hopped. Show excitement when you find the rabbit under the middle flower pot!]

I did not remember where the rabbit hid because I did not always keep my eyes on the rabbit. I watched something else when the rabbit hid under a pot.

- ASK:**
- May I try our game again?
 - What should I make sure to do this time? (always watch the rabbit)

ACT: The rabbit is going to hop, hop, hop and then hide again. This time I am going to watch closely and try to remember where the rabbit hides.

[Hop the rabbit on the floor and on top of the flower pots, always in full view of the toddlers. Hide the rabbit under the left or right flower pot.]

The rabbit hopped under a flower pot. He is hiding from us again!

This time I can remember where the rabbit is hiding because I watched the rabbit all the time. I did not look at something else. I kept my eyes on the rabbit.

I remember the rabbit is hiding under this flower pot.

[Point to the correct flower pot. Invite a toddler to lift the pot to reveal the rabbit. Lead toddlers in expressing excitement about remembering where the rabbit was hiding.]

RECAP: We played a game of watching our toy rabbit hop around and then hide. I could not remember where the rabbit was hiding the first time it went hopping. Why? (did not watch the rabbit at all times) There are neat things to look at in our room. It is easy to pay attention to something else. But the second time our rabbit went hopping, I watched the rabbit all of the time. I remembered where the rabbit was hiding because I paid attention to the rabbit.



24–36 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Executive function

A toddler plays a game of watching and remembering where a toy rabbit is hiding.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember



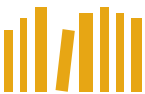
Materials Needed

3 nonbreakable flower pots
(see Be Prepared)
Small toy rabbit



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive



Optional Reading

Tale of Peter Rabbit by
Beatrix Potter

Be Prepared: The toy rabbit should be able to fit fully under each of the pots. The pots can be different sizes and colors, if you wish. Use baskets if pots are not available.

Invite one toddler to play a memory game with a toy rabbit. Explain that the toy rabbit likes to hop, hop, hop and then hide under a flower pot. Encourage the toddler to pretend we are in a garden. Rabbits like to visit gardens because there are good things to eat.

Explain that in our game we watch the rabbit hop around and then remember where it is hiding. Place the three pots upside down in a row or in a different configuration if you anticipate the toddler is ready for slightly more challenge.

Hop the rabbit around and, while the toddler is watching, place the rabbit under a pot. Invite the toddler to lift the pot where he/she remembers the rabbit is hiding.

Describe the toddler's actions and provide verbal support as appropriate. Play the game again if the toddler shows interest. Consider the Enrichment tip suggestions for adding challenge to the activity.

Conclude the activity by emphasizing how the toddler worked to watch and remember.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal Executive function

Two toddlers take turns watching and remembering the location of a toy rabbit as part of a memory game, with caregiver support.



Key Concepts

Watch
Remember
Take turns



Materials Needed

3 nonbreakable flower pots (see Be Prepared)
Small toy rabbit



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Cognitive



Optional Reading

Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter

Be Prepared: This activity is for toddlers who readily participated in Option 2. The toy rabbit should be able to fit fully under each of the pots. The pots can be different sizes and colors, if you wish. Use baskets if pots are not available.

Invite two toddlers to join you to play a memory game with a toy rabbit that likes to hop around and hide. Remind toddlers of how the game works. Emphasize the importance of watching the rabbit at all times and remembering where it hides. Explain that the two toddlers will take turns. One toddler will hop the rabbit around the area (a pretend garden, as described in Options 1 and 2) and hide it under a flower pot. The other toddler will watch and try to remember where the rabbit hides. Then toddlers reverse roles.

Play the game for two rounds (each child does the hopping or finding twice). Provide verbal support as appropriate. Facilitate turn-taking. Offer a third round if both toddlers seem interested. End the activity by reminding toddlers that we worked hard to watch and remember where the rabbit went.

What to Look For—Options 1–3

This is one of several activities for older toddlers (24–36 months) that use a simple memory game to promote executive-function skills. These skills include paying attention (watching) and holding onto and using information (remembering). Executive function also involves inhibiting natural thoughts and responses that are not helpful to the situation. In Option 1, for example, the caregiver demonstrating how to play the game looks away from the toy rabbit briefly and explains that looking elsewhere makes it impossible to know where the rabbit is hiding. In a second round of the game, the caregiver works hard to watch the toy rabbit. Similar activities are offered in Blocks 3 and 12, each with a different set of materials.

Look for ways to provide support to both toddlers who participate in Option 3. The experience of moving and hiding the rabbit is as important as watching and remembering. Incorporate supports suggested in Option 2 if toddlers find Option 3 to be too difficult. Taking turns is generally a new experience for older toddlers and your guidance in Option 3 is especially important. Describe both roles when you announce a new turn. Example: “Now it is Samantha’s turn to make the toy rabbit hop and hide. It is Julian’s turn to watch the rabbit and remember where the rabbit is hiding.”

Toddlers differ in the ease or difficulty of developing executive-function skills. Toddlers who are at a beginning level of watching and remembering may benefit from repeated participation in the game through Options 1 and/or 2.

It may be tempting to use the activity as a guessing game by encouraging toddlers to not look when the rabbit hides. A guessing game does not



promote short-term memory skills, however. Avoid using the word “guess” as part of the activity, such as saying “make another guess” if a toddler does not select a correct pot. Instead, lift the pot to reveal the rabbit and try another round.

Toddlers who are familiar with the story of Peter Rabbit (Optional Reading) may enjoy having the game introduced in relation to Peter Rabbit hopping around the garden and hiding from Mr. McGregor.

More Scaffolding Tips—Options 1–3

Extra support ■ If a toddler incorrectly identifies a pot in Option 2, put the pot with its opening face up so only two pots clearly remain for considering where the rabbit is hiding. ■ If it is challenging for a toddler to remain focused on the actions of the rabbit in Option 2, focus on the hopping part of the game and encourage the toddler to describe what the rabbit is doing. Move the rabbit with slow and intentional motions. Example: “Let’s watch the rabbit hop around. Where is the rabbit now? Where is he hopping to next?” ■ If Option 2 is too challenging for a toddler, use two pots instead of three. Also, incorporate some of the Option 1 strategies into Option 2.

Enrichment ■ Invite the toddler in Option 2 to make the toy rabbit hop and hide while you watch and remember where the rabbit is hiding. ■ In Option 2, move the location of one or more pots after you hide the rabbit. Encourage the toddler to watch the pot where the rabbit is hiding.

Interest Area

Materials Needed: sensory table, several toy rabbits, several flower pots and other containers, shredded paper for pretend grass

Invite several toddlers to play at the sensory table with materials described above. Encourage them to hide the rabbits (while their peers are watching) under the pretend grass, flower pots, or other containers for their peers to find.

Family Child Care

Materials Needed: *Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

Read the book with children in your care prior to offering Option 1 or 2 to toddlers. Help toddlers and preschool-age children connect the game to the story of Peter Rabbit hopping around the garden and hiding from Mr. McGregor. Preschool-age children may enjoy hopping and hiding the toy rabbit in Options 1 and/or 2. Babies may enjoy holding a toy rabbit during any of the option activities.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers participate in a book sharing focused on ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Key Concepts

Calm down
Upset



Materials Needed

Calm-Down Time by Elizabeth Verdick



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

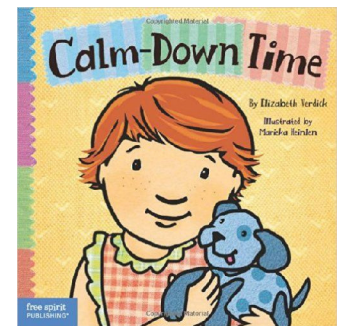
BEGIN: [Invite 3–5 toddlers to join you in reading a book about calming down.]

We are learning ways to help our body feel quiet. We can calm down by taking deep breaths and by moving our bodies in special ways. We know how to pretend we are seaweed moving in the water or a cornstalk moving in the wind.

Our book tells us how to calm down when we feel upset. We can feel upset when we are angry or sad about something. All of us can feel upset sometimes.

ASK: [Show the book cover.]

- Do you think the girl in this picture looks upset or calm?
- Why does she look calm? (quietly holding puppy, smiling)
- What might her face look like if she were upset? (crying, shouting)



ACT: Our book is called *Calm-Down Time*. Let's look inside our book.

[Add your own words to the book text to help toddlers understand pictures and concepts, including what it means to feel upset.

Point to and describe facial expressions and behaviors of children in the pictures. Example: picture of boy who looks unhappy and is shouting. Invite toddlers to describe what they see in a picture, especially facial expressions.

Emphasize how situations are related to what we feel. Example: the pictured situation of children not sharing toys: a girl with all play pieces and a boy with none. The boy feels mad.

Explain that sometimes we need help from someone else to calm down. Describe the teacher's help in the book. Draw attention to getting a hug from someone else.

Emphasize ways children in the book are getting calm. Examples: giving ourselves "a squeeze" (hug). "The girl in this picture is singing a quiet song. Look at her face. What do you think the singing is making her feel?"

Explain that "taking care of me" means we do things to make sure we feel good.

**Option 1 continued**

Pause frequently to provide time for toddlers to talk. Acknowledge and build on toddlers' comments, facial responses, and pointing.]

RECAP: Sometimes we feel upset about something. We are upset when we feel mad or sad. Our book told us some ways we can calm down when we feel upset. One way we can feel better when we are upset is to give ourselves “a squeeze.” Let’s all give ourselves a hug!

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

Children will be very familiar with the idea of “calm-down time.” The ELM Curriculum gives important attention to ways we can regulate our feelings, behaviors, and thoughts. Young children are often asked something like “What are you upset about?” This activity can help toddlers connect the feelings of sad and mad to the word upset. The book builds on information shared in many prior activities, including feeling mad and sad, plus ways to calm down. Look for ways to remind toddlers of what we are learning about feelings and helping our body feel quiet.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ In the opening segment, briefly demonstrate taking a deep and slow breath, pretending to be a cornstalk moving in the wind or seaweed moving in the water as a reminders of ways we can calm our bodies. ■ Emphasize that it is children (not you) who are saying “1, 2, 3. Take care of me.” Make sure toddlers do not erroneously think “take care of me” means take care of you.

Enrichment ■ Connect the concept of feeling upset to the idea of feeling down, as explored in Block 20’s Social-Emotional activity featuring the book *I Feel*.

24–36 Months

Option 2 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Awareness of emotions

Toddlers practice some ways to calm down when feeling upset.



Key Concepts

Calm down
Upset



Materials Needed

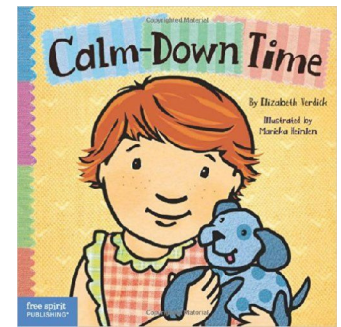
Calm-Down Time by Elizabeth Verdick



Also Promotes

Communication/Language
Self-Regulation

This is a follow-up activity for toddlers who participated in Option 1 or have been introduced to the *Calm-Down Time* book through a similar book sharing.



Show the book cover and remind toddlers that our book tells us some ways to calm down when feeling upset (mad or sad). Explain that all of us feel upset sometimes. Show and describe 1–2 pictures in the book that involve a child feeling upset.

Explain that we do not need to stay mad or sad. We can do things to feel better. Remind toddlers that the book talks about “take care of me.”

Select book pages that show calm-down strategies you think would be especially helpful to toddlers in your gathering. It is fine and helpful to repeat practices previously introduced. Describe the picture while pointing to specifics. Then demonstrate and invite toddlers to practice the strategy. Ask a toddler to describe and demonstrate strategies that are familiar, such as wrapping arms around oneself for a squeeze (suggested in Option 1’s Recap). Other possibilities to highlight include the following:

- Take slow and deep breaths: Use a quiet voice to lead toddlers in breathing in and out.
- Ask for a hug: Suggest words a toddler would use to ask for a hug from an adult in your room. Invite a toddler to show how to ask for a hug. Then hug the volunteer toddler.
- Gently rock back and forth or side to side: Gently lead toddlers in doing one or both of these actions.
- Sing a quiet song: Use a simple song that is familiar to toddlers. Invite toddlers to join you.
- Describe a calming-down space in your room, if it exists. Visit the space with toddlers and talk about when and how it can be used.

Emphasize how a strategy can help us feel better. Conclude the session by asking toddlers to talk about their favorite way to calm down.

What to Look For—Option 2

Some toddlers may prefer to watch rather than practice the strategies featured in the session. Positively acknowledge different forms of participation. Watching is an active way to learn.

**Option 2 continued**

Toddlers will differ in their familiarity with calming-down practices you select for attention. Use a pace that matches toddlers' responses to pictures and descriptions. Spend more time describing a strategy that seems unfamiliar to toddlers. In contrast, some practices will be very familiar to some toddlers. Invite them to describe and demonstrate the practice.

 **More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2**

Extra support ■ Focus first on strategies you want toddlers to practice or watch. Time or toddler interest may be limited.

Enrichment ■ Encourage toddlers to describe book pictures you show.

**Interest Area**

Materials Needed: see activity description, *Calm-Down Time* by Elizabeth Verdick

Take several toddlers on a walk through your room and invite them to point to and talk about materials that can help us calm down. If space is available in your room for a temporary calming-down area, invite toddlers to gather some items in your room and place them in the designated space for helping us quiet our minds and bodies. Show and describe the pertinent book picture, if appropriate. Encourage toddlers to select materials for doing quiet things. Examples: crayons or markers, paper, books, stuffed toy animals (such as teddy bears), foam balls for squeezing. Set up the space with comfortable seating. The space does not need to be maintained long term or necessarily used by toddlers. What is important in the current activity is helping toddlers think about materials that can help us get calm. Carrying the items to the designated space can help reinforce the choices. Talk with toddlers about their selections.

**Family Child Care**

Materials Needed: see activity description

In addition to offering Options 1 and 2 for toddlers, encourage preschool-age children to participate in Option 2. They may enjoy leading toddlers in repeating the phrase "1, 2, 3. Take care of me" offered in the book. Preschool-age and older children also may enjoy demonstrating some of the calming practices you select for attention in Option 2.



24–36 Months

Option 1 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers engage in different physical movements, including crossing their midline, as part of a *Simon Says* game.



Key Concepts

Pay attention
Bend
Straight
Elbow
Other



Materials Needed

None



Also Promotes

Cognitive
Self-Regulation
Communication/Language

BEGIN: *[Invite 3–5 toddlers to join you in playing Simon Says.]*

EXPLAIN: *Simon Says* is a fun game to play. We move a part of our body that Simon asks us to move. We pay attention to Simon with our eyes and our ears.

I will be Simon in our game. Let's try it one time! Simon says, touch our nose.

[Demonstrate the action. Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat the request and action, if appropriate.]

Simon says, touch our toes.

[Again, demonstrate the action. Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat the request and action, if appropriate.]

Affirm toddlers' responses. Example: "You are listening and watching. You are doing what Simon asks us to do!"

We used our arm and our hand and fingers to touch our nose and then touch our toes.

Let's say together the word "nose." Now let's say together "toes."

[Lead toddlers in saying "nose" and "toes" as you point to each on your body.]

ASK: Are we ready for more?

ACT: Simon says, touch our ear. Simon says, use the same hand to touch our other ear.

[Demonstrate each of the action requests. Accentuate the use of your pointer finger for touching each of your ears. Repeat the request and action, if appropriate.]

Simon says, put one arm out straight.

[Demonstrate the action. Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat the request and action, if appropriate.]

Simon says, bend our arm.

[Demonstrate moving your outstretched arm toward you, bending at the elbow. Pause for toddlers to respond. Repeat the request and action, if appropriate.]

**Option 1 continued**

We are making our arm bend. Our arm is not straight when it bends. Our arm bends at our elbow.

EXPLAIN: This is our elbow. Let's all touch an elbow with our hand.

[Point to your elbow. Then lead toddlers in touching their elbow. It does not matter whether toddlers use their right or left hand to touch an elbow.]

We are using our hand on one arm to touch the elbow on our other arm.

[Point to your other arm.]

This is our other arm.

[Point to one of your elbows.]

What do we call this part of our body? (elbow)

ACT: Let's do several more *Simon Says* actions. Remember, we use our eyes and our ears to pay attention to what Simon asks us to do.

Simon says, use one hand to touch a knee. Simon says, use the same hand to touch our other knee.

[Offer more Simon Says requests as toddler interest and time permit. Demonstrate each action and give toddlers sufficient time to respond. Repeat requests as needed. Below are some possibilities:

- *use two hands to touch our head*
- *use all of our fingers to tickle our tummy!*
- *give ourselves a hug*
- *sit down]*

RECAP: We played *Simon Says* together. Simon asked us to move parts of our body in different ways. We paid attention to Simon by listening and watching. We put our arm out straight. What else did Simon ask us to do with our arm? (bend it) Our elbow helps us bend our arm.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 1

This activity integrates support for skills in motor movements, word knowledge, and paying attention (self-regulation). Watch toddlers' responses to *Simon Says* requests carefully so you can pace the activity in ways that match toddlers' actions and adapt the activity by offering fewer or more requests.

Three requests in the activity invite toddlers to cross the midline by moving a hand (finger) or an arm across the middle of their body. Crossing the midline involves the two hemispheres of the brain, as explained in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*, and is associated with future cognitive and motor skills.

**Option 1 continued**

It is not important at this age for children to learn left and right. It is fine to demonstrate moving your right arm while facing toddlers. Their movements will generally be a mirror of your actions, but it is okay if toddlers use an opposite side of their body.

Saying the names of body parts involved in the activity can strengthen toddlers' language skills.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 1

Extra support ■ In the opening segment of the activity, point to your eyes and ears when you describe how we pay attention to Simon. ■ Use fewer requests if the length and range of different movements in the activity seem too challenging for toddlers. Keep requests that involve crossing the midline, if possible.

Enrichment ■ Increase the number of actions that request toddlers to cross the midline. Example: Invite toddlers to touch one shoulder with the opposite hand. Demonstrate the action. ■ Add a request focused on voice volume. Examples: "Simon says, say elbow with a big voice." "Simon says, say elbow with a small voice. Pretend we are a little kitten with a quiet voice. This is our small voice." Open your arms wide when you say "big voice." Put hands together when you say "small voice."



24–36 Months

Option 2 One-to-One



Skill and Goal

Fine motor development
Gross motor development

A toddler crosses the midline with his/her arm while collecting small balls in a water table.



Key Concepts

Other
Full
Empty



Materials Needed

Sensory table (see Be Prepared)
5–8 ping-pong balls (see Be Prepared)
Nonbreakable cup
Water or art smock
1–2 small plastic baskets (see Enrichment tip)



Also Promotes

Cognitive

Be Prepared: Put 2–3 inches of warm water in a sensory table or tub. Fill the cup with ping-pong balls. Another type of small ball or floating item may be used instead of ping-pong balls.

Two toddlers with appropriate self-regulation skills could participate in the activity at the same time. Place the toddlers on opposite sides of the table and facilitate turn-taking in picking up a ball. Provide enough balls so each toddler's cup is full at the start.

Invite a toddler to play with balls at the water table. Ask the toddler to stand in the middle of a side of the table. This position encourages the toddler to cross his/her midline during the activity. If the table is the shape of a rectangle, ask the toddler to stand in the middle of a longer side.

Give the cup of balls to the toddler and invite him/her to drop the balls into the water. Encourage the toddler to hold the cup high enough above the water so balls splash slightly when they hit the water and move to different parts of the water table. If the balls end up mostly in one part of the table that does not involve crossing the midline to pick up, use your hand to gently move the balls to different parts of the water.

Encourage a toddler to hold the cup in one hand and reach for and pick up the balls, one ball at a time, with his/her other hand. It does not matter whether the toddler uses a right or left hand to pick up balls. The toddler will reach across the midline while picking up some balls. Encourage the toddler to put each ball in his/her cup until the cup is full. Emphasize the word full. Point out that the cup is now empty. When the cup is full, invite the toddler to pour the balls back into the water and again pick up balls and put each in the cup held in his/her other hand. Emphasize that the cup is again empty after the balls are dropped into the water.

What to Look For—Option 2

A toddler practices several different types of motor coordination in this activity. Use of small muscles in hand and fingers is central to picking up a ball. Both sides of the body are used in an organized manner at the same time when a toddler grasps a ball with one hand and transfers it to a cup held by the opposite hand (technically known as bilateral coordination).

Early experiences in fine motor coordination are related to later fine motor skills, such as using scissors, drawing, and writing. Gross motor coordination in the early years is associated with later large muscle use, such as climbing stairs and riding a tricycle. Of course, practice in coordinating use of both hands is offered daily in care routines, such as handwashing and dressing. The current activity offers a focused repetitiveness that also involves variations (location of balls) that support eye-hand coordination.

**Option 2 continued**

Encourage a toddler to take his/her time if there's a tendency to rush or pick up more than one ball at a time.

If a toddler avoids moving his/her arm across the midline to pick up a ball (example: moving the position of his/her body so it is close to a ball), positively acknowledge the toddler's action and also gently encourage the toddler to stand in the middle of a table side. Reluctance to move an arm across the midline may be useful information about a toddler's motor development, including eye-hand coordination. Observe the toddler's motor actions in other settings to secure a better understanding of the toddler's motor development. See the section on Observing and Supporting Children's Progress in Developing Foundation Skills in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: Birth–36 Months*.

Look for opportunities to use the words empty and full in relation to the cup, as suggested in the activity description. At this age, some toddlers are beginning to develop an awareness of number concepts.

If a toddler seems to have difficulty with eye-hand coordination with this task, consider offering less challenging practice, such as dropping balls (one at a time) into a wide-mouth bottle.

More Scaffolding Tips—Option 2

Extra support ■ Point to a ball(s) that a toddler can pick up by crossing his/her midline. Example: "Look at the ball over here. Try to pick up this ball with your hand." ■ Offer a progress report. Example: "Look at how many balls you have put in your cup. There are just a few more balls in the water waiting to be picked up."

Enrichment ■ Add bubbles or coloring to the water. ■ As the toddler adds each ball to his/her cup, say "you picked up one more." ■ Jumbo animal counters can be used in the water, although they do not float and some toddlers may not want to put a whole hand in the water. ■ Attach 1–2 small plastic baskets to the outside of the sensory table. Encourage the toddler reach across his/her body to pick up a ball then put it into a basket. Example: Use his/her right hand to pick up a ball from the left side of the table and put it into a basket, and use his/her left hand to pick up a ball from the right side of the table and put it into a basket. Use the word other instead of left and right when describing the action. The toddler will cross the midline to pick up each ball.



24–36 Months

Option 3 Informal Gathering



Skill and Goal

Gross motor development

Toddlers move their bodies, including crossing the midline, while acting out a pretend story.



Key Concepts

Swim
Other



Materials Needed

Mr. Gumpy's Outing by John Burningham
Mat or rug



Also Promotes

Communication/Language



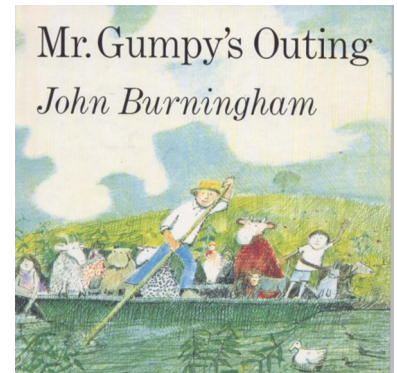
Optional Reading

Boats by Byron Barton
Blue Boat by Kersten Hamilton
Richard Scarry's Boats by Richard Scarry

Be Prepared: Be familiar with the story so you can easily talk about the text while sharing pictures with toddlers who participate in the activity. Secure a large mat or rug that will serve as an imaginary boat in the second segment of the activity. Ensure the pretend boat can accommodate the number of toddlers you anticipate will participate.

Invite 3–5 toddlers to join you for a ride in a pretend boat. Share the book, *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*, by pointing to and describing pictures in your own words. This segment of the activity is intended to be brief and to set the stage for motor activity in the second segment of the activity. Focus on the story sequence:

1. Many friends got in Mr. Gumpy's boat.
2. Friends wiggled and the boat tipped over.
3. Everyone was in the water.
4. Mr. Gumpy and friends got out of the boat and dried off.
5. Then they all had something to drink (tea).



Lead the toddlers in acting out a simple version of the story. Ask toddlers if they would like to get into a pretend boat with you. Invite the toddlers to sit on the rug or area that serves as your pretend boat. Offer again a short version of the story you shared in the first segment of the activity.

Next, tell toddlers the boat is tipping over. Example: "Oh, we are rolling into the water! We are getting very wet!" Encourage toddlers to roll out of the boat. Stand and demonstrate a swimming motion by moving one arm and then the other. Encourage toddlers to make a swim-type motion with two arms. Repeat an action phrase, such as "Let's swim, swim, swim."

Give each toddler a pretend towel and repeat a phrase about getting dried off. Encourage toddlers to use one hand to "pat, pat, pat" a leg and arm. Encourage and demonstrate how to use one hand to pretend to dry our leg and arm that is on the opposite side of our body. Emphasize the word other. The drying action will foster crossing the midline.

Next, offer the toddlers a pretend drink (story characters drink tea) and help them get calm by engaging them in a discussion of the basic story sequence. Hearing a recap of their pretend play will help toddlers remember their actions. Encourage toddlers to describe what happened.

Throughout the activity, describe the toddlers' actions, such as getting in and out of the boat. Announcing the movements helps toddlers understand action names.

**Option 3 continued**

Some toddlers may want to enact the story or a fun part of the story again or act out a version of their own. Sit close to facilitate the toddlers' interactions. Provide some narration, but allow the toddlers to recreate the story themselves.

👁️ What to Look For—Option 3

Toddlers generally enjoy games of pretend that incorporate body movements. Look for opportunities to describe and provide verbal guidance for the following motor actions:

- transitioning to sitting from standing position (getting into the boat)
- rolling or tipping sideways (falling out of the boat)
- alternating arm movements (swimming)
- patting one side of the body with opposite hand (drying with a towel)

Toddlers may enjoy pretending to be one of the animal friends in the story or one of the boys and girls. It is fine to adapt the story to fit toddlers' ideas and interests. Example: If one or more toddlers want to be puppies, change your narration to include puppies, such as "Mr. Gumpy invited all the puppies into the boat."

During child-initiated play periods you may see the toddlers involved in more boat play. Play themes are often repeated by toddlers.

📈 More Scaffolding Tips—Option 3

Extra support ■ Describe each part of the activity. Example: "The rug is our boat." ■ Acknowledge children who wish to observe. ■ Demonstrate each motion, including actions that involve crossing the midline (drying off after getting out of the pretend water). ■ Encourage toddlers to give themselves a hug if additional calming is needed at the conclusion of the activity.

Enrichment ■ Add props, such as a teapot or animal toys. ■ Encourage the toddlers to make paddling or rowing motions. ■ Use a puppet as Mr. Gumpy.



Interest Area

Materials Needed: small boats or nonbreakable bowls, animal figures or jumbo counters, easel painting, shaving cream, foamy paint, small cloth or sponge, books, animal figures and people figures, books about boats (see Optional Reading list)

Small boats and animal figures, such as jumbo counters in warm water, create an opportunity for fine motor practice. Nonbreakable bowls can serve as boats for small animal figures. On another day, repeat the book sharing in the block area and encourage toddlers to use blocks and toy animals to represent the story.

Easel painting is a soothing activity for toddlers that fosters fine and gross motor movements, including crossing the midline. Generally toddlers paint up and down, and then begin horizontal and circular movements. On another day, consider spreading shaving cream or foamy paint on a low table for toddlers to touch and smooth over the table surface. Toddlers will also enjoy washing the table with a small cloth or sponge, which is another action that promotes crossing the midline.

Display books about boats on a low surface and encourage toddlers to describe what they see in book pictures.



Family Child Care

Children in a mixed-age group will all enjoy hearing the story of *Mr. Gumpy's Outing* (Option 3). Preschool-age children may enjoy play in a pretend boat and also playing with items that float and objects that sink in water.

Extend the Option 3 boat theme to an infant by sitting on the floor to hold an infant who can sit on his/her own. Face the infant and hold his/her torso as you sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Support his/her body as you tip the infant back gently and guide his/her body back into a regular sitting position.

A young toddler (12–24 months) also may enjoy the feeling of tipping back and moving forward. Sit on the floor facing the toddler and hold his/her hands as you move gently back and forth. Preschool-age children can sit face to face in a pretend rowboat. Encourage the children to hold hands and move their torsos gently back and forth.